Julie Grace <redacted>
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To seanadreformwg@taoiseach.gov.ie
cc
Subject Working Group on Seanad Reform - Consultation Process: Submission by Julie Grace

Dear Members of the Seanad Reform Working Group,

I would like to offer my suggestions, as invited, for your consideration.

By way of context, I must advise that I am a former public servant, who worked at Galway City Council. I was a dedicated and committed public servant. However, I when I refused to participate in wrongdoings with council officials, I was 'dispensed with' by way of a sham interview process. Unfortunately, a disabled council tenant who was victimised by colleague officials, using the cover of legal services, took her own life. The details are all documented in my book 'Abuse of Power: Because Councils Can' (2014).

This matter was raised in the Seanad, and not many Senators engaged, nor expressed much concern about the catalogue of abuses carried out; under the umbrella of the State.

From my perspective as a citizen of this country, I would be interested in establishing the type of society the current members of the Seanad believe they are supporting. As the upper house of the Oireachtas, do Senators have any responsibility to debate and/or research answers supplied by a Minister of their Junior in the House?

In place of accepting 'any answer' as a 'fait accompli' or a definite response, consider please what powers or responsibilities have Senators at the moment in proposing or debating alternative solutions when formal replies are less than satisfactory or thorough?

In a situation such as my own, how does a citizen hold a reluctant-to-engage Minister accountable for resolutions? I suggest that brushing away questions with replies that redirect responsibility away from a Minister down the line to a County/City Manager/CEO is not good enough. This scenario is providing many potential opportunities for abuses of power, funded by the State, as outlined in my book.

I would be happy to speak or meet with any of you, to debate this matter, and contribute positively to your attempts at reform of the Seanad.

Le mór meas,

Julie Grace, Galway
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